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Faculty Senate Minutes

November 17, 2000

Members Present: **College of the Arts:** K. Davis, D. Douglas, S. Nielsen. **College of Business:** S. MaGruder, R. Smith. **College of Education & Psychology:** S. Alber, J. Olmi, J. Rachal. **College of Health & Human Sciences:** M. Forster, S. Hubble, M. Nettles. **College of Liberal Arts:** K. Austin, D. Goff, A. Kaul, J. Meyer, W. Scarborough. **College of Science & Technology:** D. Beckett, B. Coates, M. Cobb, D. Dunn, C. Hoyle, M. Lux, D. McCain, L. McDowell. **University Libraries:** T. Graham, S. Laughlin. **College of International & Continuing Education:** M. Miller. **Gulf Park:** D. Alford.

Members Represented by Proxy: **College of Business:** D. Duhon (J. Carr) T. Green (R. Smith). **College of Liberal Arts:** M. Dearmey (W. Scarborough), A. Jaffe (D. Hunt), S. Oshrin (W. Scarborough), G. Stringer (A. Wallace). **College of Nursing:** J. Butts (M. Lux), E. Harrison (Ann Brock). **Institute of Marine Sciences:** J. Lytle (M. Forster). **Gulf Park:** J. Smith (D. Alford).

Members Absent: **College of Education & Psychology:** E. Lundin, J. Palmer. **College of Health & Human Sciences:** S. Graham-Kresge. **College of Liberal Arts:** D. Cabana. **College of Science & Technology:** G. Rayborn.

Visitor: M. Sumrall, Staff Council.

Forum Speakers: Provost Henry and Associate Provost M. J. McMahon.

Dr. Henry offered comments on several issues:

Budget challenges. Though the university dodged a bullet on the 5% call back by way of the

governor's reprieve, we are facing a second year without raises for faculty or staff. Last year we lost 18 faculty positions, including library professionals, from Academic Affairs. Unless the revenue and expenditure gap closes, we'll face challenges in the next fiscal year as well. Even should we have to make additional cuts, however, we will persevere, because of our fine people; the university community is proud, confident and resilient.

Post-tenure review. USM stepped forward on this issue. Development of our proposal was a

good example of real shared governance, with extensive communication between Faculty Senate and the provost's office. So where are we on post-tenure review at this point? All universities are required to have final proposals for Commissioner Layzell's review in April, and the plan is to begin implementation in Fall 2001. USM influenced what the board adopted as umbrella policy. The policy might have been much more prescriptive, but the leadership here shown by Mary Lux and others, set what we believe is the right tone. Now we face a challenge of looking carefully at the process of annual review, which is tied to post-tenure review; we need to examine rigor and uniformity issues in the annual review process.

Accountability/performance measures. The IHL has adopted accountability measures [Dr. Henry passed around a publication of a pilot study]. Our strategic plan sets us in good stead to respond to these measures without compromising the flexibility and responsibility of academic units. The provost's office is now working closely with deans, with input from chairs and directors, on how performance measures should evolve, using the strategic plan as the primary reference.

"Abbreviated Responsibility Centered Management." The meaning of this management approach

is still unclear to many. Essentially, aRCM shifts a great deal of decision making on the use of resources within colleges and units to the college level, and to some degree even to the departments and schools. This decentralization includes the ability to retain salaries related to temporarily vacant positions for other uses. Alternative use of salaries has already allowed for the renovation of the former fire station to create the "jazz station" and for development of the language lab in liberal arts; in the near future retained salaries will be used for the greenhouse outside the Walker building. A related process is the "carry forward" of dollars from one year to the next, including personnel dollars. aRCM represents an important innovation under Pres. Fleming since the adoption of the Strategic Plan. It is unfortunate that thus far we have been faced with almost nothing but bad budget news and reductions, so that we have not seen the full benefits of ARCM. Nonetheless, the deans recently wrote a letter to the president, indicating that ARCM was a vital management tool during the past academic year, maintaining responsibility and resource management at the local level of operation during a difficult budgetary period.

Core revision. Revision of general education core curriculum is ongoing. Since last year good progress has been made; more is expected as the expanded committee continues its work.

Communication. We now have many examples of successful efforts at communication – including the president's budget hearings, faculty and staff forums, the current schedule of forums with colleges, various committees and special purpose tasks forces (e.g., the Council on Diversity), the space allocation committee, the Cabinet and extended Cabinet, Academic Council and Graduate Council, the Faculty Senate, as well as others. A regular presence of the provost's office at the Senate is desirable, and especially useful for the clarification of information, without any intent to change the nature or tone of conversation in the Senate. It is important to note, however, that often we communicate well enough, and we simply disagree on issues. There needs to be room for respectful disagreement in the context of improved understanding.

Questions for Provost Henry:

M. Miller: Are we confident that we will not face budget cuts this year? Answer: We are about 75% sure at this point, based on current estimates of the tax revenue shortfall.

M. Lux: Perhaps two years ago, the Council of Chairs created a policy on five-year reviews of chairs. Has this policy been implemented? Answer: Yes, there is a five-year review at this point, with assumption of renewal, but only after a major review. I will need to ask the deans on the progress here. The policy was to be implemented this Fall, but I have to check.

A. Kaul: What is the status of tuition hikes? Answer: There is much talk of tuition increases. For us, the tuition issue is two-fold. First is the issue of parity; there is no reason for one comprehensive university to be different than another, and we need to close the gap between USM and the other comprehensives. Second is the possibility of an across-the-board tuition hike for all the universities.

A. Kaul: Is it possible that pay raises would come from tuition hike? Answer: In fact we have a fear that under pressure the Legislature will authorize pay raises without providing money to cover them. In that scenario we'd need flat (i.e., no cut) funding plus a substantial tuition hike to manage any raises. The only alternative would be a major internal reallocation, which is not feasible.

M. Lux: IHL documents indicate that USM has fewer faculty for more students than the other universities. Can we use that fact to our advantage? Answer: Unfortunately, all universities don't count "full time equivalent faculty" in the same way; there may be "noise" in the existing data. This issue is being looked at now by the System Planning Council. If the data stand up, we may be able to make a strong case.

M. J. McMahon explained her major areas of responsibility and interests as

Associate Provost:

Academic programs. Responsibilities here include Academic Council liaison (shared with J. Hollandsworth); curriculum modification and development (including EGECE, and experiential learning, which is getting increasing attention nationally due to the number of non-traditional learners); new programs; liaison with the Office of Technology Resources (she has an interest in web-based programming, and there is an ad hoc committee on information access, including student access to library and other services); and liaison to the Council of Chairs.

Space. Dr. McMahon has a background in space utilization. As USM has little space to allocate, the focus is on more effective space utilization. Included under this heading are facilities and equipment, and liaison to the facilities' office.

Faculty issues. A priority here is revision of the Faculty Handbook. Dr. McMahon has discussed the issue once with the Senate's executive committee thus far. She has all of B. Middlebrooks' Handbook materials, and is awaiting material from the Senate on recommended changes. Her plan is to work closely with the Senate on the Handbook. This area also encompasses faculty development -- including assistance in coordinating the Lucas awards, summer teaching and research awards, and faculty excellence awards -- as well as promotion and tenure issues.

Dr. McMahon's other interests include enrollment management, scholarships, and freshman year experience. She also serves as the provost's liaison to the Athletics Council. At the provost's request, finally, she helps to coordinate the IHL college fair and similar activities.

Dr. McMahon works closely with Dr. Hollandsworth in meeting the responsibilities of the provost's office.

She has been at USM now three and one-half months. She feels she has a good grasp of policies and issues at this point. She still needs to learn more about the campus culture, and welcomes input from the Senate. Faculty should feel free to drop in, call, or send email.

Questions for Associate Provost McMahon:

D. Goff stated that he has just finished a summation of Senate recommendations on the Faculty Handbook. He understands that the administration has some concerns about the current Handbook. What will be the process of working through issues? Answer: Dr. McMahon deferred to Dr. Henry, who stated that the Senate recommendations will be carefully read first, and compared to what is in place now. Following this review, the administration and Senate will dialogue, and hopefully arrive at a consensus. A good example is the third year review. The

provost's office does have significant concerns here. The process of coming to a decision about revising the third year review will be one of shared governance, however. Dr. McMahon added that she would like to meet with D. Goff or other appropriate members of the Senate as final recommendations are prepared, so that she can get an understanding of how the recommendations were arrived at, the rationales and interpretations behind them, and any sense of priorities. This process will facilitate dialogue.

J. Rachal asked if the position of director of freshman experience is a new one. Answer: No, we are replacing someone who left. The director's position is a critical one that most institutions of our size and complexity have, often at a dean's level. The position affords an opportunity to link freshmen with honors, residence life, counseling and health services, support services, etc. At present USM suffers from some lack of coordination. We need to address why students drop out, how to get them back to the university, and how to get them connected to services that they need to succeed. In the future, the "freshman" experience might evolve into the "first year" experience, since half our undergraduates come in with two years; the central concern with these students is the same as with freshmen, i.e., how to get them effectively grounded. We do not seem to do much now. We need careful planning to improve the chances of student success.

1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 2:45 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda. The agenda was amended as follows: The chair of the Technology Committee was changed to T. Graham as a result of D. Dunn's resignation, and the chair of the Elections Committee was changed to S. Hubble due to D. McCain taking a leave of absence. Item 6.2, Delegation Reports, was added to New Business. The agenda was accepted as amended.

3.0 Minutes Approval. Minutes of the October meeting were approved as distributed.

4.0 Executive Committee Reports

4.1 President's Report. Pres. Laughlin offered the following report:

Legislative Forum:

The Legislative Forum that was held last Friday was well attended. Four of our Legislators were there: Representatives Mike Lott, Lee Jarrell Davis, and Joey Fillingane, and Senator Tom King. Issues that were addressed included parity funding for USM, IHL Board representation, faculty and staff salaries, and health insurance and benefits. Some things that I brought away from that meeting were: the State still has a difficult budget situation, we all need to become more effective

lobbyists, and USM needs to speak with one voice on the issues that concern us (including faculty, staff, and all campuses).

Cabinet:

The Lieutenant Governor was on campus and met with the Cabinet on October 25th. Joe Paul and Jim Borsig made a presentation to her about the University and there was a short question and answer session. This took place before the Governor's decision to exempt IHL from budget call-backs, and the primary topic during that hour with the Lieutenant Governor was the budget.

In other Cabinet meetings, a Mediation Pilot Program was announced. Eighteen employees on both the Hattiesburg and Gulf Coast campuses have been trained to serve as mediators in disputes that arise in the workplace. This does not take the place of established university grievance procedures, but is an alternative to those procedures. This process is for faculty and staff, and more information is available from Human Resources.

Royce Pierce introduced the concept of a transportation fee, which would replace the current vehicle registration system. This fee would provide funds for things like a shuttle system, bicycle paths and parking, pedestrian pathways, and enhanced vehicle parking. There was much discussion about this and some disagreement. Further discussion and decision making about such a fee will take place in the Transportation Committee. In a separate meeting with Royce Pierce, he and I discussed the need for better enforcement of zone parking regulations. He has a plan to put more personnel into this effort. Other issues that he and I discussed were the need to enforce zone regulations from the first day of classes, and the undesirability of increasing fees during this time of no raises.

President Fleming announced that the Capital Campaign kickoff will take place in conjunction with the annual Black Tie Dinner on April 20th. Susan Hollandsworth has been named the Campaign Director.

IHL

Yesterday's IHL meeting was very uneventful. We spent most of the morning standing in the hall while the board held an executive session to discuss the Ayers case. The Attorney General and other attorneys were present for that meeting, but no information was released.

Committee Changes:

Technology Committee: Dean Dunn has resigned as Chair of the Technology Committee, and Toby Graham has agreed to finish the year as chair of this

committee. I've appointed Maria Cobb as an additional member of this committee. Thanks to Dean Dunn for several years of hard work on the Senate Technology Committee.

Elections Committee: Doug McCain is taking a leave of absence as chair of the Elections Committee, and Susan Hubble will serve as Acting Chair.

Questions/Comments on the President's Report

J. Olmi requested a list of elected officials who did not show for the legislative reception. Pres. Laughlin indicated that she would provide such a list.

D. Alford asked how mediators had been selected for the Mediation Pilot Program. Faculty at the Gulf Park campus have been unable to find out even who these individuals are; there is an air of secrecy about the matter. Pres. Laughlin responded that administrators solicited names of people who might be capable. M. J. McMahon added that there had been no general call out, but rather individuals noted for "good people skills" had been recommended. R. Woodrick [Director of Affirmative Action] could give more detailed information on the process. D. Dunn stated that faculty input should have been solicited; the selection process as described smacks of top-down rather than two-way communication.

J. Rachal asked Pres. Laughlin if R. Pierce had been receptive to the Senate's positions in their one-to-one conversation. Pres. Laughlin responded that it had been a good conversation; R. Pierce seemed sincere.

4.2 President-Elect's Report. No report.

4.3 Secretary's Report. No report.

4.4 Secretary-Elect's Report. D. Alford read out the proxies. [See members represented by proxy above.]

5.0 Committee Reports.

5.1 Academic and Governance. M. Lux reported that the committee is currently examining efforts to articulate and implement the concept of "expanded scholarship." Faculty input both for and against the concept are welcome.

5.2 Administration and Faculty Evaluations. K. Davis highlighted a distributed report. Key points were as follows:

A meeting with M. J. McMahon and J. Hollandsworth secured administrative evaluations on the university calendar – evaluations will be distributed the 3rd

week of January, with a deadline for submission three weeks later. The provost will endorse the process in a letter to faculty; deans will be encouraged to do similarly.

The committee will ask the Council of Chairs to stress with faculty, staff and student monitors the confidentiality of course evaluations, and generally the importance of conducting the evaluation process in an appropriate manner.

The administration is open to reinstating evaluations of the vice-presidents, provost, and president, but questions remain as to both the purpose of such evaluations and the process by which such evaluations should be conducted. In past efforts the administration considered the process burdensome and of unclear value.

Faculty in the College of Nursing wish to include two assistant deans in the administrative evaluations, as the assistant deans serve in a quasi-chair capacity. The committee supports the more comprehensive inclusion of all assistant deans across campus in the evaluation process.

Discussion regarding evaluations:

S. Magruder raised a concern, expressed to him by several colleagues, about administrative evaluations submitted late, and argued in favor of a consequence for late submission and failure to submit; without some consequence, administrators are too likely to ignore or discount the evaluation process.

Pres. Laughlin suggested that the Senate make late/failed submissions public.

A. Scarborough, J. Rachal, and K. Austin all made points in favor of reviving evaluations of executive administrators. Faculty are competent to judge many aspects of administrative performance; the most important issue in developing an appropriate process may be identifying the right questions for faculty to respond to. It is vital that faculty criticism not be muzzled through exclusion from the evaluation of top administrators.

Pres. Laughlin noted that the faculty participation rate in administrative evaluations has fallen off since the initiation of the process. Senators should strongly encourage faculty to participate.

S. Magruder asked if there is a process specified in the Senate's constitution or by-laws for taking a "no confidence" vote on an administrator. Pres. Laughlin responded that no distinct process is specified; a "no confidence" action would be taken by way of standard parliamentary procedure.

5.3 Archives. No report

5.4 Athletic Liaison. T. Green was not present.

5.5 Awards. D. Alford reported in S. Graham-Kresge's stead. The HEADWAE award winner has been selected, but not announced. Nominations are currently open for faculty excellence awards; nominations should be made to the Associate Provost's office, by mail or email.

5.6 Faculty Welfare. Goff reported for J. Rachal, who was not able to attend the most recent committee meeting, which focused on health insurance. The committee is reviewing alternative models and approaches taken in other states.

Discussion followed regarding health insurance issues:

D. Beckett reported that he has found a private plan that provides superior coverage of children at a lower cost than the state employees plan. He will share this information with anyone who requests it.

D. Beckett noted further that he recently discovered that the wisdom tooth removal benefit will be dropped from the dental plan as of January 1 – apparently by decision of the State of Mississippi Insurance Board without any input from plan participants. D. Beckett strongly recommended that the Senate closely monitor and where possible challenge this group, and suggested that the faculty welfare committee investigate the board's membership and working process.

J. Olmi expressed sharp dissatisfaction over the lack of information provided plan participants and asked why the university human resources department has not notified us of the reduction in dental coverage. D. Dunn agreed that since we are allowed to make selections only once per year, participants must be notified of coverage changes with sufficient lead time to make informed decisions.

M. Cobb told of dropping all coverage through the state plan three years ago, and recommended that colleagues consider coverage through independent insurance providers.

S. Magruder related that the university plan recently denied his wife a physician-recommended MRI related to a neck problem on the grounds that thus far she has not suffered any damage to the neck.

D. Goff noted that one small improvement in the insurance package is coming in the form of a new mail-order prescription benefit.

J. Olmi recommended that faculty aggressively pursue the right to make choices

among insurance providers. Competition among providers would be beneficial.

D. Goff recommended inviting L. McFall of Human Resources to the Senate after the 1st of the year to explain their policies and procedures related to insurance. J. Rachal indicated that he would invite Ms. McFall to the next committee meeting as well.

Finally, J. Olmi reported that a subcommittee is interviewing colleagues separating from the university, and requested that senators let him know of any faculty planning to leave.

5.7 Constitution and Bylaws. No report.

5.8 Elections. No report. The committee planned to meet immediately following today's Senate meeting.

5.9 Environment. D. Conville highlighted a distributed landscape plan draft prepared for the university master planning committee. The plan provides guidelines to promote an attractive campus atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning, with specific recommendations regarding landscape zones, parking lots and pavement, shade and radiation, stream banks, ground cover, plazas, removal and replacement of trees, and construction sites. One recommendation is to preserve natural habitat areas near the Payne Center for teaching purposes. D. Conville will request the Senate's endorsement of the plan at the December meeting.

Discussion concerning the environment report:

D. Dunn suggested that concern for natural habitat might encompass removing the concrete from the drainage system near the Payne Center, and further requested a map indicating the proposed zones. D. Conville indicated that he will speak with G. Matlack about developing a map that can be made available to the Senate.

D. Beckett asked if campus police have been consulted about possible security concerns around natural habitat areas. D. Conville responded that discussions regarding security had not yet taken place.

5.10 Faculty Development. B. Coates announced that a new course on research ethics will be offered in Fall 2001, and introduced S. Bruton, a faculty member in Philosophy and Religion and co-instructor for the course, who explained the background and nature of the course. Inspired by increasing grantor requirements for research ethics training, the course will cover topics common to various forms of research, such as authorship, whistle-blowing, intellect property, and grantwriting. The course will be a voluntary three-credit-hour course open to all

graduate students, affording students opportunity to interact across disciplines. Currently under consideration by the Graduate Council, the course has strong support from Dean Doblin [College of Science & Technology] and Dean Griffin [Graduate School]. Assistance from the Senate was requested in making graduate advisors aware of the course. Input regarding both the content and structure of the course is welcomed. B. Coates indicated that the course syllabus will be distributed at the December meeting.

5.11 Government Relations. J. Palmer was not present.

5.12 Technology. No report.

5.13 Transportation. W. Scarborough delivered a brief report. At the most recent committee meeting R. Pierce reiterated an emphasis on parking regulation enforcement. Intentions appear to be sincere but the resources needed for follow through are inadequate. At most only four ticket writers are available. Usually there are fewer; often there are none. New handheld ticket writing machines have been secured, but there are no personnel available to use them. Despite the shortage of personnel, however, the administration remains adamantly opposed to allowing faculty, students, or other volunteers to serve as ticket writers. W. Scarborough requested data comparing the number of tickets and tows this year to last year. The data are unavailable, but everyone agrees that the numbers for this year are down. W. Scarborough noted further that no increase in fees for faculty parking is forthcoming at this time. There remains a possibility of some increase in student fees.

Discussion/comments regarding the transportation report:

J. Rachal related that he sent a note to Pres. Fleming indicating that he (Rachal) had raised \$4000 for the university as a volunteer ticket writer. In response Pres. Fleming reiterated his opposition to faculty writing tickets.

J. Olmi argued that the administration's concern over potential conflicts between faculty and students should faculty be allowed to write tickets is misplaced. On the contrary, failure to enforce the parking regulations is an invitation to conflict. In the Owings-McQuagge parking area, faculty now regularly confront students without the proper stickers. This situation will only worsen without proper enforcement.

D. Alford suggested that student ticket writer positions could easily pay for themselves from the fines generated.

W. Scarborough concluded that the underlying issue is not a lack of resources, but the administration's unwillingness to act.

5.14 AAUPLiaison. M. Dearmey was not present.

5.15 Faculty Handbook Task Force. D. Goff stated that he would arrange for the task force recommendations previously approved by the Senate to be placed on the website. There remain three items of unfinished task force business, but action on these will be delayed until the provost's office reviews and reacts to the recommendations already made.

5.16 University Faculty Senates Association. A. Kaul reported that USFA met yesterday. The members agreed to support one another, and to speak publicly in a unified voice. As the stakes rise, it is believed essential that the faculty organizations become more visible, vocal and politically active. Depending on developments during the next legislative session, faculty may be called on short notice to join in some sort of staging event at the Capitol. Further, the USFA agreed to a joint meeting with the Mississippi Association of Staff Council Organizations on December 8 to discuss "common ground" issues about which both groups could speak with a unified voice. A. Kaul also scheduled a meeting with Ward Symons, executive director of the Mississippi Association of Employees, to explore possibilities for common effort.

6.0 Old Business.

1. Web-based registration clearance. D. Alford **moved** that the Faculty Senate recommend to
2. the Registrar that the decision to require advisor clearance before a student may register in the coming web-based registration system should be an individual decision made within each academic unit. S. Hubble **seconded** the motion. The motion **passed** without discussion.
3. Delegation reports. Pres. Laughlin called for any reports of meetings between deans and Senate delegations. S. Hubble reported that the Health & Human Science delegation has met twice with Dean Boudreaux. Questions had been solicited from faculty, and both questions and answers were posted on the colleges listserv. M. Lux reported that Dean Doblin is now inviting senators to the key "curriculum meeting" in the College of Science & Technology, affording a regular opportunity for dialogue.

7.0 New Business.

1. Following Associate Provost M. J. McMahon's departure, a discussion on the presence of the provost's office at Senate meetings ensued. Strong statements were

made by several senators on each side, both favoring and opposing attendance by administrators not explicitly invited. Attendance proponents noted a sincere effort to promote communication between administration and faculty. Opponents pointed to the intrusiveness of an uninvited presence and feared a dampening effect on open discussion. The majority viewpoint emerged that Senate meetings are generally open to guests and it would be inappropriate to exclude administrators from any part of a regular meeting that they want to attend. Participation and dialogue should be encouraged. At the same time, the Senate expects its openness to be reciprocated; Senate representatives should be permitted to attend dean's council and budget-related meetings in their entirety, and should not be asked to leave at any point.

Pres. Laughlin noted that Pres. Fleming will be the forum speaker at the December 8th meeting of the Senate, and reminded senators that the president will host a brown-bag lunch discussion next Tuesday at noon in the Commons.

Also on the theme of communication, Pres. Laughlin reported that the ad hoc communication committee is currently conducting closed sessions with interviewees.

W. Scarborough offered the view that the administration still does not appreciate the need for genuine two-way communication. In their concept of "shared governance," they hold the bigger share.

8.0 Announcements. No announcements were made.

9.0 Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 4:41 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Michael Forster, Faculty Senate Secretary.